



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JULY 13, 2015

No. 108

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, may our lawmakers delight today in Your guidance, finding joy in their daily fellowship with You. Strengthened by this fellowship, enable them to be as productive as trees planted by streams of water. Lord, give our Senators the wisdom to live for Your glory in each of life's seasons.

Protect our Nation from the forces that seek to destroy it both foreign and domestic. Lord, don't permit the weapons formed against America to prosper, for You remain our refuge and fortress. Continue to be the strength of our lives as we refuse to forget the many times You have protected and preserved us in the past.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BASIN AND RANGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Mr. REID. Madam President, cowboy poet Georgie Connell Sicking conveyed my feelings for the Nevada desert in her poem "Nevada's Subtle Beauty."

This picture I have in the Chamber has appeared all over the country. It appeared, for example, in the Washington Post a week or so ago, and there are other pictures that show this at more of a distance. The man there is so small compared to the vastness of the Nevada terrain. But here is what Georgie Sicking said in her poem:

Have you gone outdoors one morning after a summer rain,

With a gentle breeze blowing across a black sage valley

And smelled the earthy sagey freshness, none like it on this earth.

It sure makes life worth living, and you know when God was giving, He didn't short-change Nevada.

Have you ever in the afternoon watched the mountains changing colors,

From the shadows as they grow from brown and black to tan and violet,

Or sometimes the deepest blue.

Ever changing, ever different, they seem to smile, then frown,

Waiting for sky colors to be added as the sun goes down.

If these things I mention you have seen and felt and known,

Beware, for Nevada has a hold on you and will claim you for her own.

This is not Iowa terrain. It is very typical Nevada terrain, the deserts of Nevada. It is perfect. It is peaceful. It is the Nevada desert. It feels right. To me, it feels like home.

Last Friday, President Obama permanently protected over 700,000 acres of land in Eastern Nevada as the Basin and Range National Monument, which photographer Tyler Roemer has captured beautifully in these pictures.

The land President Obama designated as a monument—two basins and one range—is a perfect example of the stark beauty of the Nevada desert. This monument is an area where the Mojave Desert meets the Great Basin and Joshua trees and cactus give way to sagebrush. This monument is an area that is home to desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope.

This monument is an area that provided food and shelter for Native Americans and is where one can see their history today in incredible rock art panels we call petroglyphs. This monument is an area that reflects the pioneering western history from early explorers to the ranching that still exists.

Four or five years ago, I visited this area. I had been in the area but not here. I went there for a number of reasons. I had been informed of a five-decade-old art project in the middle of the vastness of this desert. While going to see this work of art, I also saw the unique beauty of the Nevada desert, and it is unique. After I completed my trip, in giving this a lot of thought and contemplation, I became passionate about doing something to protect and preserve this incredible work of art and the stark beauty of the desert, both of which are priceless.

This picture is part of the City. This work of art has taken 48 years to construct. It is the size of the National Mall here. It is a couple miles long and very wide—almost a mile wide. It is something that is in the center of the Basin and Range National Monument. It is called the City. It is a grand modern art sculpture the size of, I repeat, the National Mall, part of which you can see in this photo from a group called the Triple Aught Foundation.

The creator is internationally renowned artist Michael Heizer, who is known all over the world. He has been working on this project, as I indicated, since 1972.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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